

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE
Town Hall Conference Room B**

Tuesday, August 20, 2013

MINUTES

Members: Paul Aho, Steve Bacon, Laurie Best, Karla Fox, Manny Haidous, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, Peter Millman, Betsy Paterson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

Guests: Howard Kaufman, LeylandAlliance; Dale Cutler, Kenyon & Cutler Architects; Linda Painter, Mansfield Director of Planning and Development; Board members Harry Birkenruth, George Jones, Philip Lodewick (by phone), Toni Moran, Ted Yungclas

1. Call to Order

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Minutes from July 16, 2013

Betsy Paterson made a motion to approve the July 16, 2013 minutes. Laurie Best seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4. Review of Preliminary Plans for Educational Playcare

Mr. Bacon introduced Linda Painter, the Town's Director of Planning and Development, Howard Kaufman from LeylandAlliance and fellow Board members.

Mr. Kaufman introduced Dale Cutler, the architect for the Educational Playcare proposed building.

Mr. Cutler said Educational Playcare was formed in 1986 by Gerry Pastor and Jane Porterfield. He said they opened a facility in Avon in 1991 and have four other facilities in Connecticut. Mr. Cutler said they are very excited about the Storrs Center site.

Mr. Cutler said the site would be licensed for up to 196 children and he showed the Committee and visitors the proposed site plan. The facility would be open year round and has a 7,000 square foot footprint.

Toni Moran asked whether the site was very steep and Mr. Cutler replied in the affirmative. He said the play area will be behind the eastern side of the building.

Karla Fox asked if the facility and teachers are state accredited and Mr. Cutler replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Cutler said the facility will be three stories on the back side and two on the front side due to the slope. The color scheme for the building has not been determined yet.

Mr. Cutler said he believes the design is responsive to the Storrs Center Special Design District regulations and Design Guidelines. The day care is being designed in a Victorian vernacular. He said the front entrance will be at the corner of Wilbur Cross Way and a side street.

Paul Aho asked how the design team is addressing traffic. Mr. Cutler said the owners have discussed this with Mr. Kaufman and the plan is to schedule intervals of drop off and pick up times i.e., from 7 am to 9 am and then 4 pm to 6 pm. Manny Haidous asked if buses could access the site and Mr. Cutler replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Cutler said there will be 12 classrooms in the building. The younger children will be located on the lower level with the older children on the higher level.

Ms. Fox asked about a food prep area and play space inside. Mr. Cutler said there is a food prep area, and play space inside.

Chris Kueffner asked how the Mansfield facility would be different than their other Connecticut facilities. Mr. Cutler said it is expected they would be similar.

Jon Hand said it will be important for Educational Playcare to reach out to the local law enforcement to ensure that they are on the same page with respect to security measures. Mr. Cutler said visitors have to be “buzzed in” and there is a reception area. Ms. Paterson noted that there is a vestibule area so the building includes a set of double doors.

Ted Yungclas asked if there is adequate storage for coats in the classrooms. Mr. Cutler said the storage would be adequate.

Mr. Cutler said there is an elevator in the building for wheelchair accessibility.

Mr. Cutler said the building has a full sprinkler system.

Mr. Cutler and Mr. Kaufman said employees will park in the garage.

Peter Millman asked how much of the road system is built to accommodate the day care. Mr. Kaufman said the drop off could be in Wilbur Cross Way. They will need to talk to the Town’s Traffic Authority to review how to sign the road, and then get it approved by the Traffic Authority.

Mr. Kueffner asked what is envisioned on the eastern end of the building. Mr. Cutler said the play area has not been fully designed yet. Mr. Kueffner encouraged the entire Storrs Center area to create some pocket parks as originally envisioned.

Ms. Fox asked what the adjacent uses would be to the day care. Mr. Kaufman said future for sale residential is planned behind the day care. The uses along Wilbur Cross Way are still to be determined.

Mr. Kueffner asked about the ceiling height. Mr. Cutler said it is 10 to 11 feet.

Mr. Bacon noted that there were a number of operational questions that have been posed that can be addressed at some point but are not part of the zoning permit application approval process. These include teacher/student ratio; process for food preparation to rooms; how are naps accommodated; is gross motor room similar to other facilities; cost to parents/care takers.

Mr. Kueffner asked about the efficiency of the building. Mr. Cutler said the team will follow the Storrs Center Sustainability Guidelines and go beyond the insulation requirements in the Guidelines. They will try to use local materials as much as possible. The building will be heated with natural gas and likely LED lighting or high efficient fluorescent lighting.

Mr. Millman asked how the team is balancing energy savings with natural light (heat loss from windows). Mr. Cutler said there will be a lot of interior glazing. The windows are not excessively large and will be double hung. The windows will likely be able to be opened.

Mr. Cutler asked for feedback on the aesthetics of the building. He said the goal was to create an iconic, old schoolhouse look. Committee members expressed support for the look of the building.

Mr. Kueffner said he would like to see the staircase have more of a presence when people come in. Mr. Cutler said the building code requires the staircase to be enclosed but they may be able to make it more visible.

Mr. Haidous asked how people will be protected from snow on the roof. Mr. Cutler said there is protection over the doors and they will probably include snow guards.

Toni Moran asked about the configuration of the lobby on the main floor. Mr. Cutler said it is open with above, serving as an atrium.

Mr. Kueffner asked the design team to reconsider the roof over the lobby as he feels it is too large. Mr. Cutler argued for keeping the roof the way it is.

Mr. Bacon asked if there could be different shades of brick where the blank wall is located. Mr. Cutler said one idea is to put the logo there. Mr. Cutler said the building is not too tall but they wanted the brick base to be plain to give it some significance.

Mr. Cutler said they will do some color in the pre-finished windows.

Mr. Millman asked if landscaping could be done in front of the wall that would help break it up. Perhaps a bench element for waiting parents would help?

Linda Painter said colors and material boards will be needed before the public hearing. She added that traffic circulation is a key element.

Mr. Kueffner asked about the surface of the playground area. Mr. Cutler said it would be synthetic.

Ms. Fox said there need to be information sessions about the day care. Mr. Kaufman said they could hold sessions throughout the year.

5. Review of DRAFT Zoning Permit Application for Town Square

Mr. Kueffner asked about the size of the lawn area in the plan for the town square. Betsy Paterson said there was concern about the cost of maintenance for a larger green area.

Mr. Bacon said there has been discussion about closing off part of Dog Lane and Royce Circle for events so there is actually more space than the actual town square footprint.

Ms. Paterson made a motion to recommend the zoning permit application as submitted to the Partnership Board of Directors. Mr. Millman seconded the motion. The motion was approved with an abstention by Mr. Kueffner.

6. Storrs Center Overview

Ms. Paterson and Ms. Painter left the meeting.

Mr. Kaufman provided an update on new businesses including oneTribe, ThinkitDrinkit, Storrs Wine & Spirits, and GBS Threading & Spa.

The Committee brainstormed other commercial ideas.

Mr. Aho left the meeting.

Mr. Kaufman said Leyland hopes to bring back plans on the for sale housing to interested buyers in the fall.

Cynthia van Zelm said the transportation center will open in November, and the Partnership plans to move its office to the second floor of the center.

Mr. Haidous and George Jones left the meeting.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Millman made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hand seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Minutes prepared by Cynthia van Zelm